

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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WILDLIFE REFUGE TASK FORCE SEEKS PEOPLE'S VIEWS

An analytical look into the future of the 33-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System is the purpose of a special task force convened on August 26 by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and chaired by Deputy Director Robert S. Cook.

Representatives of the Sierra Club, Defenders of Wildlife, League of Women Voters, Wildlife Management Institute, National Audubon Society, and National Wildlife Refuge Association, plus State, university, and Interior Department representatives make up the 10-person group which will complete its initial study and make recommendations to the Service by mid-October. The group, all familiar with the operation of the system, will in effect update previous advisory studies and try to chart a course for the future management of the system of 387 refuges.

The August 26 meeting discussed the past, present, and future needs of the refuge system, the management system currently in effect in the Service, and the development of strategies to blend the needs of people with the needs of the wildlife resources on the refuges.

The group will visit selected refuges and confer with managers and refuge personnel in various locales. Following the formulation of recommendations by the task force the report will be circulated to the public in order to solicit views on the management of the system and the objectives of the Service.

The study and recommendations will be used by the Director and his field directors in decisions concerning the future role of refuges and the benefits of habitat protection, wildlife management, interpretation, environmental education, and recreation.

The task force members, in addition to Dr. Cook, are:

Ms. Juanita Alvarez, U.S. Department of the Interior
Mr. Forrest A. Carpenter, National Wildlife Refuge Association
Mr. Charles M. Clusen, Sierra Club
Dr. John W. Grandy, IV, Defenders of Wildlife
Dr. Laurence R. Jahn, Wildlife Management Institute
Dr. Willard D. Klimstra, Wildlife Department, Southern Illinois University
Mr. C. Eugene Knoder, National Audubon Society
Ms. Betty N. MacDonald, League of Women Voters of the U.S.
Mr. Chester F. Phelps, Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries
Mr. Ronald F. Way, U.S. Department of the Interior